



Child Labor Cultural Norms and Practices: Brazil

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Key Questions

- What is the magnitude of child labor in present-day Brazil?
- What practices and initiatives is Brazil making in an effort to eliminate child labor?

Why Does This Issue Matter?

- Under the Brazilian Constitution, child labor is prohibited by federal law and recognizes the right to childhood as a social right. The law states the minimum working age is 16 years old, but the law prohibits anyone under the age of 18 from working in unhealthy, dangerous, or morally harmful working conditions.
- 3.7 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 worked in the formal and informal sector
54% decline since 2001
- U.S. Dept. of State: half of working children are unpaid and 90% work in the informal sector
- Children are often far from their families, controlled by their employer, invisible to public authorities, frequently deprived of basic rights and related social services, decent lodging and working conditions, deprived of protection from sexual harassment and mental and physical abuse
- Child Labor affecting children's education:
 - 3.7 million children between 4 and 17 were not attending school
 - Enrollment:
 - Males: 96%
 - Females: 94%
 - Poverty is a major issue keeping children (especially females) out of school because parents rely on children to stay at home to help cook, clean, take care of younger children, and work
 - In 2010, 3.7million children between 4 and 17 were not attending school
 - Children living in urban areas had on avg. 3.5 more years of schooling than children in rural areas
- Reporter Brazil (2013): Judges often authorized children under the age of 16 to work in dangerous & hazardous conditions based on the need for children to contribute to the family's economy
- Worse forms of Child Labor:
 - Occurs in the agriculture, domestic work, and sexual exploitation areas
 - Agriculture: children are exposed to hazardous conditions, long hours, dangerous tools, exposure to pesticides, risk of physical injuries, and unsanitary conditions
 - Child trafficking from Bolivia and Paraguay to work in the textile manufacturing industry
 - Domestic Services 2010 → 350,000 children between 10 and 17 reported being domestic workers in Brazil
- Efforts to Eliminate:
 - Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE) fines violators who are guilty of employing underage children
 - From 2007 to 2010 labor inspections tripled:
 - 2007: 981
 - 2010: 3284
 - 2011: 7024
 - MTE removed 10,362 children engaged in child labor and imposed \$730 million in fines

RESPONSE TO CHILD LABOR



PROGRAM TO ERADICATE CHILD LABOR (PETI)

Provides families with monthly cash stipends if they commit to keep their children in school and out of work.

FAMILY BASKET PROGRAM

Family must have children under 18 who attend school regularly in order to receive conditional cash transfers that supplements income for families living with less than 70 reais a month (\$30/month)

INFORMAL SYSTEM ON LOCATIONS OF CHILD LABOR (SITI)

Plans inspections in an effort to eliminate the worst forms of child labor and contains detailed information on where child labor occurs.

THE BAHIA DECENT WORK PROJECT

Brazilian Authorities and ILO-IPEC are implementing this project to make Bahia the first state in Brazil without child labor. Implementation of a mechanism that will monitor and locate potential child laborers will be used. Campaigns to raise awareness and train identification agents will be used.

COMBATING THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR HORIZONTAL COOPERATION IN SOUTH AMERICA PROJECT

\$6.75 million initiative to promote South-South cooperation among Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Paraguay to combat child labor and aims to rescue 6,600 children from exploitative work.

Conclusion & Future Research

Brazil has had its share of child labor issues, over the past decade, the country shows great improvement in its efforts to eliminate child labor and spread awareness on the issue. A strong mix of initiatives in education, labor inspection, family income assistance, efforts to develop child labor statistics, actions programs, and NGOs are responsible for much of child labor's decline in Brazil. Even though the country is still not 100% child labor free, Brazil has seen a drastic decrease in child labor over the past 20 years; and based on future projections will continue to see a decrease.

References

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